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TAGS: [PREL](#) [OTRA](#) [AMGT](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: COUNTRY CLEARANCE GRANTED FOR GULF SECURITY
DIALOGUE TEAM VISIT TO OMAN

REF: STATE 143813

11. Embassy Muscat grants country clearance to the Gulf Security Dialogue Team to travel to Muscat on October 30, 2007 for Gulf Security Dialogue meetings. Please note action items in paragraphs five and eight.

12. Cellular Telephones: For security reasons, all visitors are required to possess a cellular telephone compatible with the GSM-900 frequency band used in Oman. North American cell phones will work only if they are multi-band phones supporting GSM-900. If visitors do not have a compatible cellular telephone, one will be issued by the Embassy through the control officer and the related expenses charged to the traveler's travel authorization. Visitors are responsible for contacting the control officer upon arrival to coordinate cell phone distribution. Large groups will be required to provide a fund cite in advance to cover rental costs. Lost phones and chargers will be charged either to a fund cite or directly to the traveler if no fund cite is provided.

13. Control officer for this visit is Pol/Econ Chief, Eric Carlson, office phone IVG/DSN: 741-3453; commercial: (968) 2464-3453; GSM (cell): (968) 99-442-725; email: CarlsonE2@state.gov; 24-hour Marine Security Guard at Post One is (968) 24-643-555. Oman is eight hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Savings Time. Embassy workweek is Saturday to Wednesday.

14. Embassy will meet and assist travelers on arrival. Six club rooms have been confirmed at OR 85 (USD 220.78) per night at the Muscat Intercontinental Hotel, phone (968) 2468-0000; fax (968) 2469-4037, for the night of October 30. Please note that this rate is above per diem; Embassy was unable to find rooms in Muscat within per diem. Embassy is working on securing three additional rooms and control officer will advise by email. The M&IE portion of per diem in Muscat is \$137.00 per day.

15. Requirement for credit card or fundcite in advance of travel: Travelers to Oman are advised that hotels in Oman are implementing a 24-hour cancellation policy, whereby reservations not guaranteed with a credit card may be released. Further should guaranteed reservations be cancelled within 24 hours of the arrival date, or be cut short with less than 24 hours notice to the date being cancelled, hotels reserve the right to charge a one-night stay. Should changes be made to a travel itinerary, please notify the control officer immediately. In most cases, hotels will do their best to accommodate official visitors, provided notice of cancellations is given promptly. Travelers are strongly advised to contact either the hotel or the control officer with credit card information or provide the control officer with a fundcite in advance of arrival.

16. Visas: A visa is required for travel to Oman. Travelers may purchase a visa valid for one month at the airport for 6

Omani Rials (approximately USD 16). Diplomatic passport holders usually are not required to pay, but may be required to do so depending on the Immigration Officer on duty at the time. This visa may be renewed one time. To reduce time in the airport, visitors can obtain visas from the Omani Embassy in the country of origin. To do this, take a copy of travel orders or a letter from the agency stating that travel is official, to the Omani Embassy.

¶7. Forbidden items: The Sultanate prohibits pornographic literature and firearms from entering Oman. Local law limits each traveler to two bottles of alcohol. Items subject to confiscation at the airport include but are not limited to compact discs and videos and audiocassettes.

¶8. Customs: To assist with customs, visitors should inform the Embassy by fax (968-24-643-740, ATTN: GSO, Customs and Shipping) of any special or unusual tools or items that they plan to bring into Oman. The fax must be received by GSO AT LEAST 14 days prior to arrival. The importation of special tools must be coordinated with local customs authorities. Travelers ignoring this requirement risk having their items detained at the airport. Note: This applies only to unusual items. It does not apply to items such as laptops. If the traveler has any questions regarding this requirement, please contact the control officer listed in para 3.

CURRENT SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN OMAN

¶9. Crime: Street crimes and crimes of physical violence are very rare in Muscat, especially within the diplomatic community. Nevertheless, travelers to Oman are vulnerable to crimes of opportunity. Do not leave valuables in plain sight when exiting your hotel room. Most hotel rooms are equipped with small safes for personal property. If one is not available, or you have larger items to stores, use a safety deposit box at the hotel front desk. Additionally, keep your money separate from your passport, credit cards, and other important documents. Do not leave valuables in plain sight in your vehicle. When traveling at night, park your vehicle in locations that are well illuminated. Common sense and caution are always the best crime prevention. However, if you are the victim of a crime, contact MSG Post 1 (968-24-693-555) immediately for Embassy assistance.

¶10. Political Violence: Oman and specifically Muscat are not "hot spots" for internal political violence or anti-American terrorism. However, fluctuating events in the Middle East can escalate political tensions in the Arabian Gulf and the security situation can rapidly change. Although peaceful demonstrations have occurred whenever local tensions boil over, these demonstrations have been well-controlled by the Royal Oman Police. To receive current information on the local security atmosphere, visitors must receive a security briefing from the RSO at the earliest opportunity. Visitors are reminded to maintain a heightened state of security awareness; doing so will help ensure a safe stay in Muscat. Check travel.state.gov for current travel advisories, including the Middle East region.

LOCAL SENSITIVITIES

¶11. Local Sensitivities: Modest dress is the rule in Oman. Men and women should avoid wearing shorts and sleeveless shirts in public places, although wearing conservative swimming suits is acceptable at hotel beaches. Photography of military, religious, and government installations is forbidden and one should ask permission before photographing Omani nationals.

¶12. For additional information about the Embassy and Oman, please check the Embassy Intranet website:

<http://muscat.state.gov>; the Department's Overseas Security
Advisory Council website <http://www.ds-osac.org>; and the
Government of Oman Internet website: <http://www.omanet.om>.
If you have access to the State Department Classified System
visit the Embassy SIPRNET website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/muscat>.
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